3. Evidence of the Program's Effectiveness in Increasing Student Achievement

Failure Free Reading (FFR) is based on over 20 years of research and development. Failure Free Reading has over 80 studies with an "n" of over 6300 students, demonstrating effectiveness with a wide range of student populations, age groups, and geographic settings. A summary of 82 of these studies is shown in Table 1.1 below.

Total "n"	Special Ed	At Risk	Title I	ESL	Rural	Suburb	Urban	Inner City	Elem	Middle	High
6385	21	64	35	5	33	18	6	25	72	9	3

Table 1.1

The following research results provide summaries of sample evidence of effectiveness for Failure Free Reading (FFR) as measured by third party researchers - see Appendix B for details.

a) Northeast Middle School in Cecil County, MD implemented FFR during summer school in 2003. The target population was students with disabilities who were reading 3 to 4 grades below their grade placement. After 4 weeks treatment, students were able to read at the appropriate grade level material, move onto our Verbal Master series, and transfer the vocabulary and comprehension skills to their science and social studies classes.
b) In Alabama, FFR was implemented at Florence Howard Elementary in Mobile County and Akron High School in Hale County. Using FFR, both schools moved from the Alert I status to Clear status in one year.
c) Klein I.S.D. in suburban, southeast Texas performed two separate, but similar evaluations of FFR implementation. In both studies, data showed statistically significant increases in Word Attack and Reading Comprehension subtest scores for 3rd and 5th graders who had pre test scores below the 30th percentile (see Table 2.1).

Treatment Group / Test Section	n	Pre	Post	Increase	# with Increase	% with Increase
Study 1: 3rd graders / Reading Comprehension	12	79.5	89.5	10.0	10	83.3%
Study 2: 3rd graders / Reading Comprehension	34	80.3	91.9	11.5	31	91.2%
Study 1: 5th graders / Reading Comprehension	10	76.9	82.8	5.9	9	90.0%
Study 2: 5th graders / Reading Comprehension	16	79.9	89.4	9.4	13	81.3%
Study 1: 3rd graders / Word Attack	14	81.4	90.5	9.1	9	64.3%
Study 2: 3rd graders / Word Attack	28	78.6	91.9	13.2	25	89.3%
Study 1: 5th graders / Word Attack	9	82.9	89.6	6.7	7	77.8%
Study 2: 5th graders / Word Attack	15	83.7	90.3	6.5	12	80.0%

Table 2.1 – Klein ISD Studies 1 & 2 – Woodcock Johnson Pre and Post Test Results

d) FFR was implemented in over 30 schools during a statewide reading grant in Ohio. STAR Reading Assessment comprehension scores were collected on 405

students at 16 of the 30 schools. Before entering the program, 45 of the students were 2.5 or more years behind in reading. The results showed a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) increase in grade equivalence growth for the students with an effect size of 0.76 (substantial impact). They also had a statistically significant growth ($p < 0.01$) in Normal Curve Equivalence (NCE) of 6.61, with an effect size of 0.60 (moderately large).

e) In an independent study performed by Fairland East Elementary School in southeast Ohio, the growth in reading scores (on the Ohio 4th Grade Proficiency test) for a control group was compared to a FFR treatment group. The average reading score on the Ohio 4th Grade Proficiency Test for the control group decreased by -2.31 points ($x_{pre} = 215.31$; $x_{post} = 213.00$). The Failure Free Reading treatment group had a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) increase of 8.62 points ($x_{pre} = 209.08$; $x_{post} = 217.70$) on the Ohio 4th Grade Proficiency Test. Fairland East received recognition for having the highest increase in Ohio 4th Grade Proficiency Test scores in the state.

f) During 2000-01, 46 Florida schools (who began the school year with a "D" rank from the state) received Comprehensive School Reform grants (see Appendix B.2 for full Table listing). One of these schools was Greensboro Elementary in Gadsden County. Greensboro Elementary decided to implement FFR as its reform model to help accelerate the learning curve of its lowest literacy students. The other 45 schools chose other, nationally recognized reform models. A year later, only three schools had raised their rank from "D" to "A". Greensboro Elementary, using FFR's reform model, was one of the three. Of the three "A" schools, Greensboro was the only one to exceed the state averages in percentages of Level 2+ and Level 3+ students on Florida's end of grade FCAT assessment.

g) Dulles Elementary in Chicago, IL implemented Failure Free Reading as an intensive reading intervention for twenty-three 3rd graders and eighteen 5th graders who were at-risk for reading failure. The 3rd graders had a statistically significant ITBS increase ($p<.01$) in their average reading grade level equivalence (xpre = 1.52; xpost = 2.35). Eighty-three percent of the students (19 of 23) had grade level growth, and forty-three percent (10 of 23) had one or more years of grade level growth during the three months in the program. The 5th graders had a statistically significant ITBS increase ($p<.01$) in their average reading grade level equivalence (xpre = 3.61; xpost = 4.87). The average grade level gain for 3 months of treatment was 1.26 years, as compared to 0.52 for the entire prior year for this group of students.

In addition, Failure Free Reading has research articles published by third party researchers in seven peer reviewed refereed journals. Many document the program's ability to change attitude toward reading and accelerate the learning curve of special needs, Title I, and at-risk students as measured by norm and criterion referenced tests. For example:

> Significant differences in oral reading, word recognition, and silent reading performance of 165 at risk students were evident after intensive intervention using the Failure Free Reading Program. Improved reading was demonstrated across

seven different curriculum-based reading measures. *Australian Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 2(3), 1997, p. 14-17.

71 first, second and third grade students identified as at-risk for reading difficulties were taught word recognition and comprehension skills using the Failure Free Reading Program. Students and teachers were surveyed concerning changes in attitudes toward reading, spelling, seatwork and school performance using Failure Free Reading's Student Attitude Adjustment Inventory. *The Journal of At-Risk Issues*, 5(1), 1998, p. 30-35.

Finally, Failure Free Reading is based on the most current scientific research demonstrating that successful reading involves the simultaneous utilization of phonemic awareness, phonics, sight words, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. Particularly, Failure Free Reading strongly relies on the findings of ***The Report of the National Reading Panel, the National Research Council's Committee on Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, NICHD/OERI and the University of Michigan's Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA).** More importantly, Failure Free Reading is based on scientific evidence validating the instructional importance of explicit instruction. Nothing is left for chance.

Failure Free Reading presents age appropriate materials within a multi-sensory, multi-media instructional format using practices based on: direct instruction, repetition theory and meta-cognitive strategies. Specifically, Failure Free Reading has created instructional materials which incorporate the principles of cumulative learning (McCormick, 1994), and stress the therapeutic necessity of (1.) repetition within multiple instructional contexts (Gates, 1930, Hargis et. al., 1992, McCormick, 1994), (2.) text manipulation of syntax and semantics (Harber, 1979, Wigg and Semel, 1980, Hiebert 2000), and (3.) providing immediate performance feedback (National Reading Panel). It is an intervention designed to change a student's "I can't" attitude toward reading by showing them that they can immediately excel at levels they never thought possible. Its mantra is: faster, higher and more!

Failure Free Reading uses a model of repetition, control, and feedback integrating teacher, text, and computer-assisted technology. The intervention is integrated and coordinated to provide multiple exposures in multiple contexts. Students read material that is designed to be of interest in their grade/age level. The logic of the intervention is that at each and every level, repetition, semantic support in the form of word meaning and word pronunciation and the "additive" principle of sentence complexity (which is relaxed in grade 3 and above) provide the scaffolding that helps struggling students immediately cope with age-appropriate reading materials (Pearson, 1999).

Student success is achieved through a cycle of previewing text content and individual word meanings, listening to the text read aloud either by teacher or computer, discussing the text content, reading the text content with support, and reviewing the key ideas in the text in worksheet and computer format. Teachers are directed to monitor student success and to provide as much repetition and support, as students need to read the day's

selection. Teachers deliver lessons through small group instruction utilizing teacher directed activities, proprietary talking software and follow-up written activities.

What makes Failure Free Reading different from other reading programs is the speed with which it works and its age appropriateness. Failure Free Reading's unique methodology allows struggling readers to instantly work at considerably higher instructional levels than their independent reading levels would suggest. Failure Free Reading's mission is to 'jump start these students with dead reading batteries' so that they can reenter the reading mainstream as quickly and effortlessly as possible. Failure Free Reading is effective because it provides the research-based conditions necessary for literacy acquisition to occur in the following areas: vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and word recognition especially sight words.

In addition, Failure Free Reading's talking software is designed to 'fast track the acquisition of English' by controlling for variables most difficult for English as a second language learners namely: sentence structure, story content and repetition. Of particular interest: Failure Free Reading's Talking Software turns the computer into a personal ESL instructor for Spanish speaking students. While the words and passages and stories are presented in English only, the directions and definitions of the new English words and passages presented are available in Spanish. Students have the option to toggle from English to Spanish to self-correct and monitor their progress in English acquisition on an as need basis.

The National Reading Panel's report to Congress in 1999 stated that comprehension is an active process that requires intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text. Failure Free Reading is based on such an interactive language development model. The primary philosophy underlining Failure Free Reading is that "reading is relating". Struggling students cannot comprehend materials to which they cannot relate. Every instructional step is taken to insure that students can relate to the standards-based content contained in the Failure Free Reading materials.

Fluency is the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy and proper expression. The National Reading Panel reports that fluency instruction has a strong relationship to comprehension. Recent research on the efficacy of teaching fluency has shown that guided repeated oral reading procedures that included guidance from teachers, peers, or parents had a significant and positive impact on word recognition, fluency and comprehension across grade levels. The results applied to all readers, good readers as well as those experiencing difficulties. The Panel also mentions that fluency is more than a "word recognition phenomenon".... Competent reading requires skills that extend beyond the single-word level to contextual reading, and this skill can best be acquired by practicing reading texts in which the words are in a meaningful context. Failure Free Reading Materials present words within such meaningful contexts.

FFR is designed to give students a basic understanding of what it feels like to fluently read meaningful passages. It also allows them to directly apply word attack skills – phonemic awareness and phonics – while reading aloud. FFR reading materials consist of

thematically connected stories using a combination of phonetically regular, high content and high frequency words. For example, a typical FFR story contains 33 unique words. Twelve words are high content, seven words are among the twenty-five most high frequency words and six words contain opportunities to practice phonetic skills with key rime exemplars. Sadly, some words are not phonically regular. These words violate the alphabetic principle. "More than 20 percent of first-grade level high-frequency words are not decodable by phonic analysis" (Hargis, 2000, p 523). Hargis further cites, "English adopts more foreign words than any other language. The spelling is seldom changed and neither is the pronunciation anglicized." FFR teaches these critical sight words in its stories through scaffolding techniques that produce a research recommended sight word density ratio of 1:12 per sight word. (Hiebert 2000).